

BOSTON INFORMER

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The newsletter for people who care about Boston

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Proposed 200 Newbury St.



200 Newbury St.

210 Newbury St. (Armani Emporio)

Source: CBT Architects

A proposal for the southwest corner of Newbury and Exeter streets in the Back Bay would turn the surface parking lot into a 44,000 sq. ft. retail/office development. The site, formerly occupied by the Normal Art School, is across from the retail-converted Prince School. The 200 Newbury Street project would have three floors of retail, one floor of offices, and underground public parking for 65 cars. The prime tenant is expected to be Nike. The projected start of construction is summer 1995 with a move-in date of winter 1996. Owner: 200 Newbury Street Corporation. Architect: CBT Architects.

Proposed MHS in a Nutshell

The state is proposing to pay for its share of the Central Artery/Tunnel project by creating a **Metropolitan Highways System (MHS)** under the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to fund and operate the Central Artery.

The MHS would consist of:

- Turnpike Extension (east of Rt. 128)
- Ted Williams Tunnel (and connections to Turnpike and I-93)
- Sumner and Callahan tunnels
- Tobin Bridge
- Central Artery/North Area (CANA) in Charlestown
- depressed Central Artery

The MHS would pay for:

- state's share of design and construction costs of Ted Williams Tunnel, CANA and depressed Central Artery (\$2 billion to \$3 billion)
- purchase of the Tobin Bridge from Massport (\$74 million)
- operating costs of the entire system (estimates are \$100 million yearly)
- payment of \$200 million in 1996 and \$200 million in 1997 to bail out the state's shortfall in highway funding

The MHS would generate funds from:

- tolls from Turnpike Extension, three tunnels and Tobin Bridge
- issuing bonds

The Governor's bill (H. 285) gives no estimate of toll levels needed to fund the plan for the long run. Instead, it provides for a study to be completed in May 1996. Some estimates (including a previous study by New York investment bankers Lazard Freres) estimate that tolls could eventually climb to \$2 to \$4 a trip. The Federal Highway Administration has threatened to cut off federal funds if the state fails to produce an acceptable financial plan by April 1, 1995.

Massport is proposing a "people mover" at Logan Airport for access from the MBTA Airport station to all terminals and the future hotel site. Although the exact technology has not been determined, the proposed \$330 million people mover is described as an electric, fully automated, driverless, rubber-tired vehicle that would run on its own elevated guideway.

Similar to what the MBTA is planning for buses at the rebuilt Airport station, the people mover would stop at the Blue Line platform level, eliminating the upstairs climb. Passengers would alight at the terminal and walk on an elevated, indoor walkway and down into the terminal.

Two expansion phases to other parts of Logan are planned. Massport explains that the 2.7-mile Phase I is needed because estimates show MBTA use to Logan increasing from 6 percent now to about 10 percent by 2010 or when air passenger levels reach 37.5 million yearly. Currently, Logan sees 24 million passengers yearly.

Massport says its shuttle bus system could support the additional passengers arriving by MBTA, but congestion on airport roadways would delay the buses. Massport is thinking ahead to when air passenger levels reach 45 million and 20 percent are arriving by MBTA: shuttle buses won't work. However, Massport acknowledges increases like that would represent a "structural change in regional travel" and that the MBTA "as presently configured may not be capable of attracting and delivering 20 percent of 45 million passengers."

Some have suggested that since the 4 percent increase in MBTA use is independent of the people mover, why not spend the time and a fraction of the money making the roadway system work better, giving priority to buses. Funding is also a question, because the project would cost almost one-third of the entire Logan 2000 program and would be competing against other projects nationally.

Moving People

James Coull, private contractor, replaces **Kathleen Card** on the Massport Board of Directors

Susan Bregman, from Boston Transportation Dept. to Multisystems Inc.

Andy McClurg, from Boston Transportation Dept. to Sasaki Associates

Jack Gillon, Boston Transportation Dept. chief engineer, to Quincy from whence he came

Vincent Mannering to Executive Director, Boston Water and Sewer Commission

Bob Loney, Fay Spofford & Thorndike, is retiring.

Theodore "Tad" Weigle, reassigned from

"project executive" at the CA/T, the top Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff position

P. Stuart Tholan becomes "program manager," CA/T project, for Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff, replacing Weigle

James Rooney, from deputy general manager of the MBTA to assistant project director and chief of financial management for CA/T

State Rep. Salvatore DiMasi, from chair of House Judiciary Committee to chair, Banks and Banking Committee

State Rep. Joseph McIntyre (New Bedford) becomes head of the House Judiciary Committee

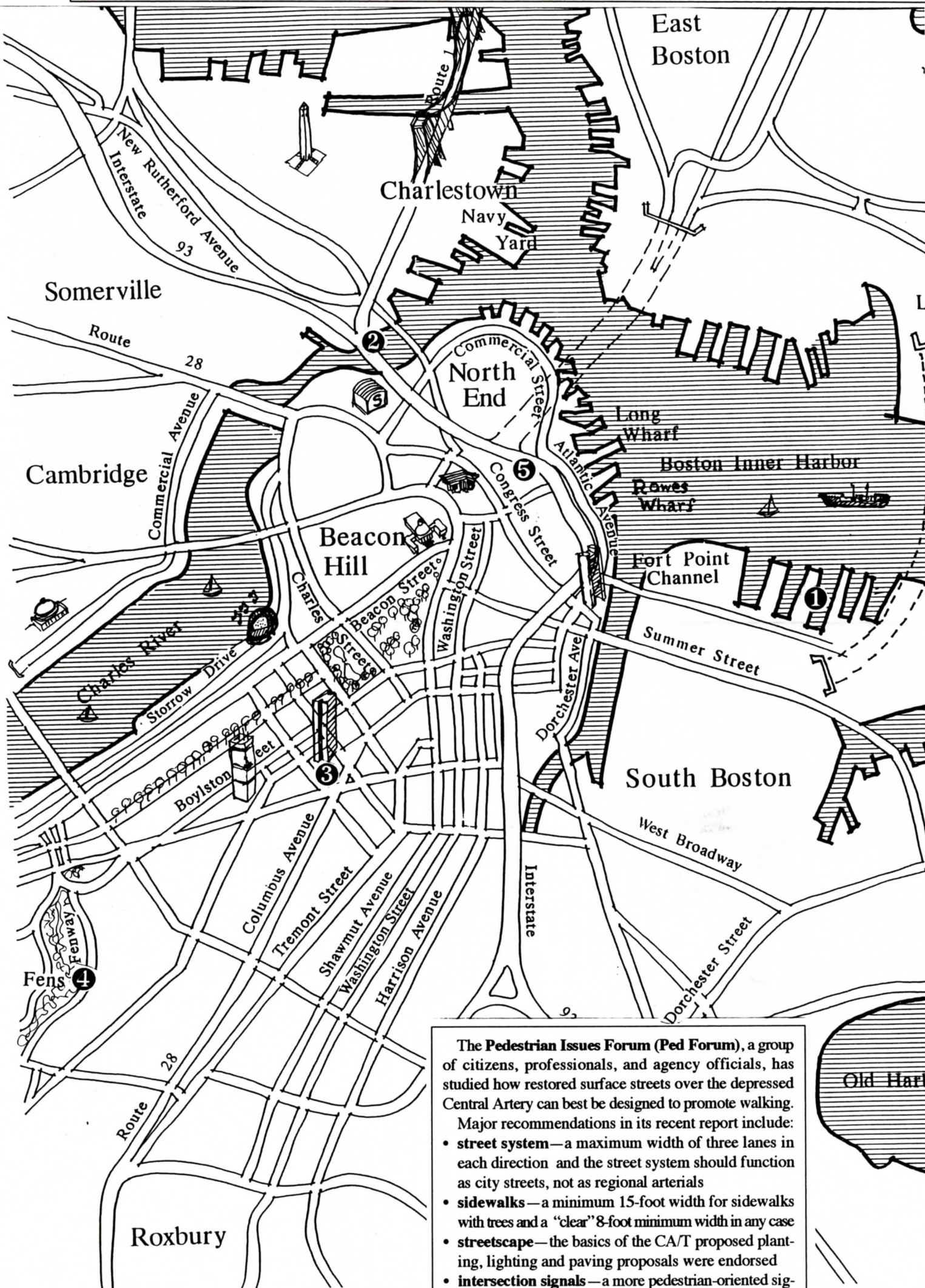
State Rep. Thomas Cahir (Bourne) becomes chair of House Transportation Committee

P. A. Carr, from media relations director of CA/T to Cablevision

M. Ilyas Bhatti, from commissioner of the Metropolitan District Commission to assistant project director and director of construction for CA/T

Ann Maguire, from Boston Chief of Health and Human Services to Provincetown to run an inn

Michael Hogan, former Marlborough mayor, Director on the MBTA Board, official in the Economic Affairs office, to executive director of the Government Land Bank, replacing **Timothy Bassett**



1 An unprecedented joint planning effort is uniting Massport and the City of Boston in a \$700,000 study to "explore strategic steps needed to spur jobs and economic growth" along Boston's waterfront. This planning study will face off the City, interested in expanding its tax base, and Massport, owners of 400 acres of tax-exempt seaport property, promoting fishing and other port industries. Major action-item components of the plan are expected by September 1995.

2 The Charles River Watershed Association, Committee for Regional Transportation, Cambridge Citizens for Liveable Neighborhoods and 44 individuals have filed suit in Federal court to stop the current Charles River Bridge plan of the Central Artery/Tunnel project. The suit alleges "irreparable harm to the Charles River Basin" if the bridge is built as designed. The group favors designs including tunnels, such as that approved by the Bridge Design Review Committee after two years of work.

3 Coming soon...a theater near you. The 400-car parking garage opposite Tent City on Dartmouth Street is being planned to become a restaurant and theater complex with access to Back Bay/South End MBTA station. The New England, current owners of the garage, is in agreement with Boylston Properties to sell the garage.

4 The State Department of Environmental Management has granted \$900,000 to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to fund its "Bridging the Emerald Necklace" proposal to restore bridges and landscapes in the Riverway and Olmsted parks. Some environmentalists maintain that cleaning up sewage in-flows to the Muddy River and general water clean-up should come first.

5 The MBTA has begun environmental work for the North Station to South Station Rail Link by filing an Environmental Notification Form with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (call the MBTA, 722-3126). The MBTA is creating a Citizens Advisory Committee and has requested the project be designated "major and complicated." A bombshell in the ENF is the decision not to extend slurry walls being built for the depressed Central Artery to the depth needed for the Link. The MBTA has opted for deep-bore tunneling, possibly to avoid having spent money for nothing if the Link is not built. The 1994 Transportation Bond package authorizes \$60 million to extend the slurry walls.

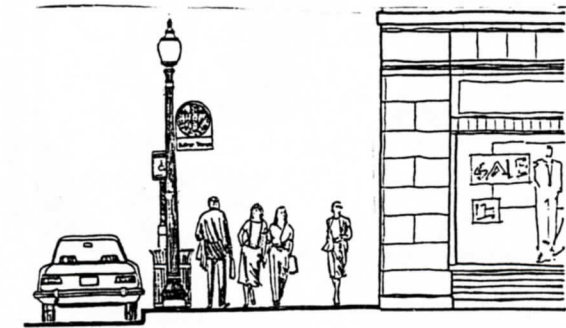
Correction: The Boylston Street Design Guidelines were produced by the Boylston Street Citizen Review Committee. Thanks to Marianne Abrams, Executive Director, Back Bay Association, for this information.

The Pedestrian Issues Forum (Ped Forum), a group of citizens, professionals, and agency officials, has studied how restored surface streets over the depressed Central Artery can best be designed to promote walking.

Major recommendations in its recent report include:

- **street system**—a maximum width of three lanes in each direction and the street system should function as city streets, not as regional arterials
- **sidewalks**—a minimum 15-foot width for sidewalks with trees and a "clear" 8-foot minimum width in any case
- **streetscape**—the basics of the CA/T proposed planting, lighting and paving proposals were endorsed
- **intersection signals**—a more pedestrian-oriented signal strategy is proposed with increased use of concurrent pedestrian/vehicle signals and fewer pedestrian push buttons

Copies of the report can be obtained for \$2.00 from Move Massachusetts 2000 at 695-0644.



Tidbits from the 1994 Transportation Bond Package...Bowdoin-Charles Blue Line-Red Line Connector: \$49 m...CA/T North End mitigation: \$2.65 m...approval for MBTA to increase fare evasion arrests and penalties...study of commuter rail to Bourne: \$1.2 m...requires MDC and MBTA, but not Mass. Highway Dept., to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in all projects...Green Line low-floor light rail vehicles: \$47 m...cancels authorization for projects included in 1988 or earlier Bond Issues...study of Circumferential Transit Corridor: \$4 m.

Inclusion in the Transportation Bond Package does not guarantee action of any type. The MBTA, for example, is subject to a spending cap and must shift projects, rather than adding projects to the list, in order to spend the authorized funds.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul is what it appears the Central Artery/Tunnel project (CA/T) is doing as it cancels Ramp DD that would have carried westbound traffic from the Ted Williams Tunnel along Marginal Road on the edge of South Cove and essentially forces the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to build an off-ramp to Berkeley Street. With no off-ramp in the South Cove area, westbound tunnel traffic would have to exit in South Boston to get access to downtown or Back Bay. The CA/T will save \$35 million and the MassPike will spend \$50 million.

The controversy around Ramp DD—Chinatown leaders objected to over 15,000 cars daily jamming this "local street"—actually ignited the drive for the Berkeley Street off-ramp. Although this seems like a local matter, it is part of a higher-level game. See article on MHS on page 1.

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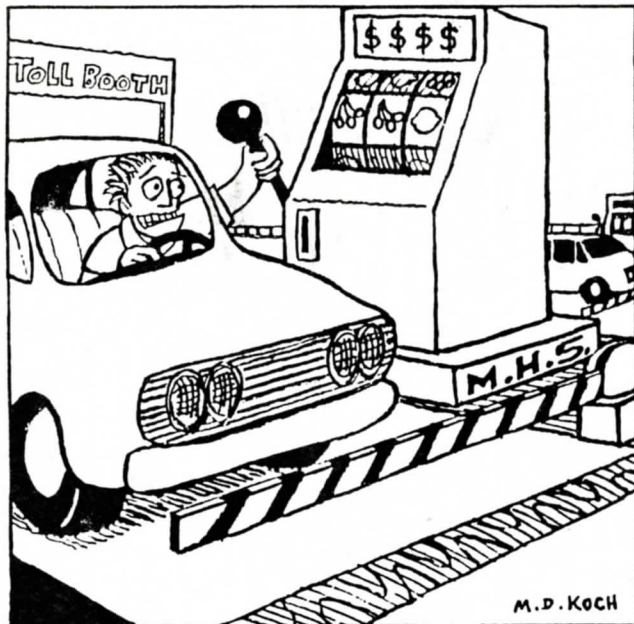
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Financing the Central Artery Project

You were asking...

Q. Isn't the huge "CASHMAN" sign on the drydock in East Boston in violation of City of Boston zoning regulations? Why is it still there?

A. Yes. Some of us are better connected than others.

Q. What are those black posts and rails recently installed at Downtown Crossing that sometimes have newspaper boxes, sometimes bikes, chained to them?

A. The four installations are not makeshift bicycle racks, but racks to group the proliferating newspaper boxes. Keeping these boxes away from light posts makes maintenance easier and looks better, too. The Boston Public Works Department, responsible for the Downtown Crossing facelift, will also be installing new, modern bicycle racks in several locations in Downtown Crossing this spring.

Q. When will the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Facility on Columbus Avenue at Roxbury Crossing open?

A. The facility, with a 200-yard indoor track and gymnasium, is expected to open in May 1995.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affect living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*! Anthony Casendino, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

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